

From: Darrell King
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 4:28pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Thank you for your careful and conscientious work in addressing the issues involved with Microsoft Settlement. I can only guess at the amount of work involved in picking through such a tangled landscape.

As I read about the proceedings, I am left with a single concern: have we ended the problem? As a small an owner of both Red Hat Linux and several Microsoft Operating Systems, I am very familiar with using both in my daily business.

I've often been concerned with the situation where Open Source products can be built for Windows (Apache, PHP, MySQL), but those dedicating to porting in the opposite direction are frustrated by an inability to easily carry a Windows-based product to a Linux environment. I have to wonder if any settlement is complete that does not address this issue in a realistic and final manner.

In my opinion, the fundamental issue here is not the protection of intellectual property. Of course Microsoft should be allowed to make a profit and protect it's ability to do so. I think, however, that having such a tight lock on the most fundamental piece of software a computer uses, the operating system, is too much control. If the Windows OS is the best, people will buy it, but no one should be forced to just because it's the only viable alternative. Both Mac and the Open Source fronts have put forth good efforts, but they are up against wall when they face compatibility issues regarding application written to run on Windows.

My solution? Make sure that the Windows API is available for use by developers who wish to integrate software with alternative operating systems. If the consumers can run their favorite programs on several different operating systems, the threat of monopoly ceases to be.

Thank you,

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